

June 30, 2006

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons

FROM: Lucille E. Davy
Acting Commissioner

SUBJECT: Highly Qualified Teachers Compliance

In a recent letter from the US Department of Education (USED), New Jersey was acknowledged for the good faith effort the state has made in complying with the highly qualified teacher provisions of NCLB. While the USED acknowledges that New Jersey is close to meeting the federal goal of 100 percent of all public school classes being taught by highly qualified teachers, New Jersey has not yet reached total compliance despite tremendous efforts statewide. As a result, **the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) must submit a revised New Jersey Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) Plan**, detailing specific actions the state will take to reach the HQT goal during the 2006-07 school year. The plan must include a detailed description of how the state will assist all districts to support teachers to deepen their content knowledge. The plan must also address how the state will ensure the equitable distribution of experienced and highly qualified teachers among classrooms with poor and minority children. The state plan must be submitted by July 7, 2006 and the department anticipates feedback from the USED by late August.

Additionally, each New Jersey school district will be required to develop a **District HQT Plan**. The plan must describe how the district will assure that all teachers are highly qualified by the end of the 2006-07 school year. Within the next few weeks, the NJDOE will provide districts with specific guidance for developing the plan along with a template and timeline for implementation. To assist with the development of district plans, the NJDOE will provide **regional technical assistance sessions**. These sessions will focus on strategies to increase the percentage of highly qualified teachers in each district to ensure equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers among high and low poverty schools. More information on the sessions will be announced later this summer.

While school districts must continue to support teachers becoming highly qualified, **the use of the state's High Objective Uniform State Evaluation Standard (HOUSE) as a tool for veteran teachers must be phased out by August 31, 2006**. The NJDOE is requesting an extension to continue use of the HOUSE as an alternate way for veteran teachers to establish their highly qualified status; however, the department cannot be certain the request will be granted by the USED. Therefore, all districts should adhere to the August 31, 2006 deadline for veteran teachers until further

notice from NJDOE. The USED has noted that certain teachers will be able to use the HOUSE for two years from date of hire if they meet the following specific criteria:

- Teachers who teach multiple secondary subjects in school districts eligible to participate in the Small, Rural School Achievement program and are highly qualified in at least one core academic subject at the time of hire;
- New special education teachers who teach multiple core academic subjects, and who are highly qualified in either mathematics, language arts, or science at the time they are hired; and
- Teachers who come to the United States from other countries to teach on a temporary basis.

Districts have a responsibility to maintain all appropriate highly qualified paperwork for every teacher assigned to teach core content areas. Teachers should retain such evidence as well. The HOUSE worksheets and identification forms for the New Jersey Model for Identifying Highly Qualified Teachers can be accessed on the department's website at <http://www.nj.gov/njded/profdev/hqt/house.pdf>. Please note that all teachers who have been deemed highly qualified through New Jersey's Model for Identifying Highly Qualified Teachers, including New Jersey's HOUSE Matrix, retain their highly qualified status within their appropriate certification(s).

Districts are now in the process of hiring for the 2006–2007 school year. **All novice teachers hired must meet the federal definition of highly qualified** by passing the appropriate Praxis II, by having 30 credits in the content area, or by having a graduate or undergraduate degree in the content area. Teachers who are new to the district must complete all the appropriate worksheets and forms and those forms must stay on file in the district.

The department will provide further information as soon as it becomes available. If you have questions about the highly qualified teacher requirements, please contact Victoria Duff at (609) 292-0189 or email your questions to hqteachers@doe.state.nj.us.

LED/JD/LM/vbd/s:vduff\hqt\June18 memo2

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